

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) A process for producing an easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica for making a coating liquid for an ink-jet recording sheet,

wherein the precipitated silica has a BET specific surface area of at least $220 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$, and

wherein when ion-exchange water is added to the easily dispersible cake to provide an aqueous dispersion of the silica with a concentration of 5% by weight, said dispersion being stirred with a propeller mixer to affect a preliminary dispersion, a resultant slurry being treated to be dispersed with a high-pressure homogenizer once at a processing pressure of 78 MPa, and further being diluted to reduce the silica concentration to 1.5% by weight, a resultant dispersion has a light-scattering index (n-value) of at least 2,

said process comprising using a liquid selected from the group consisting of aqueous alkali silicate solution, alkaline aqueous solution of which pH is adjusted with a basic substance, and water as an initial reaction liquid, wherein said initial reaction liquid is free of an electrolyte and a mineral acid, simultaneously adding an alkali silicate and a mineral acid to the reaction liquid of which pH is being maintained at a fixed value, variation width being ± 0.3 , within a range of 7.5-11.5, and of which temperature is being maintained at 92-98°C, so as to form precipitated silica, wherein a concentration of solid silica at the end of the reaction is not higher than 50 g/L; and separating said precipitated silica from said reaction liquid in a wet state, so as to obtain said easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica.

4-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing ~~the a dispersion~~ a dispersion of precipitated silica for making a coating liquid for an ink-jet recording sheet ~~according to Claim 5, which comprises~~ comprising ~~subjecting a silica slurry, formed by dispersing the cake of precipitated silica which is prepared by the process of claim 3 in~~ in the polar solvent, to a fine pulverization treatment with a high-pressure homogenizer.

8. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing ~~the dispersion~~ a dispersion of precipitated silica for making a coating liquid for an ink-jet recording sheet ~~according to Claim 6, which comprises~~ comprising subjecting a liquid premixture, formed by dispersing the cake of precipitated silica which is prepared by the process of claim 3 and ~~the~~ a cationic polymer in ~~the~~ polar a polar solvent, to a fine pulverization treatment with a high-pressure homogenizer.

9-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A process for making ~~the~~ a coating liquid for ~~the~~ an ink-jet recording sheet ~~according to Claim 9, comprising:~~

producing an easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica by a process comprising using a liquid selected from the group consisting of aqueous alkali silicate solution, alkaline aqueous solution of which pH is adjusted with a basic substance, and water as an initial reaction liquid, wherein said initial reaction liquid is free of an electrolyte and a mineral acid, simultaneously adding an alkali silicate and a mineral acid to the reaction liquid of which pH is being maintained at a fixed value, variation width being ± 0.3 , within a range of 7.5-11.5, and of which temperature is being maintained at 92-98°C, so as to form precipitated silica, wherein a concentration of solid silica at the end of the reaction is not higher than 50 g/L, and separating said precipitated silica from said reaction liquid in a wet state, so as to obtain said easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica,

wherein the precipitated silica has a BET specific surface area of at least 220 m²/g, and wherein when ion-exchange water is added to the easily dispersible cake to provide an aqueous dispersion of the silica with a concentration of 5% by weight, said dispersion being stirred with a propeller mixer to affect a preliminary dispersion, a resultant slurry being treated to be dispersed with a high-pressure homogenizer once at a processing pressure of 78 MPa, and further being diluted to reduce the silica concentration to 1.5% by weight, a resultant dispersion has a light-scattering index (n-value) of at least 2; and

dispersing the cake of precipitated silica and a binder in a polar solvent, wherein a percent transmission of the coating liquid, as measured after diluting the same to the silica concentration of 1.5% by weight, is at least 20%.

~~comprising dispersing the cake of precipitated silica and the binder in the polar solvent.~~

12. (Currently Amended) A process for making ~~the~~ a coating liquid for ~~the~~ an ink-jet recording sheet, ~~according to Claim 10,~~ comprising:

producing an easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica by a process comprising using a liquid selected from the group consisting of aqueous alkali silicate solution, alkaline aqueous solution of which pH is adjusted with a basic substance, and water as an initial reaction liquid, wherein said initial reaction liquid is free of an electrolyte and a mineral acid, simultaneously adding an alkali silicate and a mineral acid to the reaction liquid of which pH is being maintained at a fixed value, variation width being ± 0.3 , within a range of 7.5-11.5, and of which temperature is being maintained at 92-98°C, so as to form precipitated silica, wherein a concentration of solid silica at the end of the reaction is not higher than 50 g/L, and separating said precipitated silica from said reaction liquid in a wet state, so as to obtain said easily dispersible cake of precipitated silica,

wherein the precipitated silica has a BET specific surface area of at least 220 m²/g, and wherein when ion-exchange water is added to the easily dispersible cake to provide an aqueous dispersion of the silica with a concentration of 5% by weight, said dispersion being stirred with a propeller mixer to affect a preliminary dispersion, a resultant slurry being treated to be dispersed with a high-pressure homogenizer once at a processing pressure of 78 MPa, and further being diluted to reduce the silica concentration to 1.5% by weight, a resultant dispersion has a light-scattering index (n-value) of at least 2; and

dispersing the cake of precipitated silica, a binder, and a cationic polymer in a polar solvent,

wherein a percent transmission of the coating liquid, as measured after diluting the same to the silica concentration of 1.5% by weight, is at least 20%.

~~dispersing the cake of precipitated silica, the cationic polymer and the binder in the polar solvent.~~